

SHA Membership Meeting
April 6, 2022
Zoom – COVID-19 Pandemic

Diane welcomed everyone and encouraged people to put their names in the chat box as a way of introduction before the meeting was called to order. Attendees represented housing developers, supportive services providers, advocates, government representatives, corporate vendors and families. There were 55 people in attendance.

1. Meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM by SHA Board President, James Marhold. Jim asked for any updates or corrections to the minutes as posted. Hearing none, the minutes of the February 2022 meeting were approved.

Diane introduced Joseph Christensen, Member and Communication Manager of SHA j.christensen@shanj.org who introduced new members: Mission First Housing Group, Capital Impact Partners, Columbia Bank, CGL associates and Arc of Salem. Joseph thanked renewing members and emphasized the importance of keeping our contacts up to date. He also reminded members and demonstrated the member search information that helps us promote and recommend them NJ audience.

<https://www.shanj.org/member-directory-search/>

To provide this info, please fill out the member info form or contact Joseph to update. <https://www.shanj.org/join-sha-2/>

2. Kate Kelly Project Manager for the SHA Integrated Community Project (ICP) to give an update. Currently in Phase III. The Municipal Self-Assessment is complete and identifies 7 themes for integration. So far, we have done an interactive self-assessment for seven municipalities with two more to be scheduled. The goal will be to work with 3 in all the target counties (Bergen, Ocean and Camden). Kate asked for help in making connections in Camden City and Collingswood. Finally, SHA will produce a municipal toolkit to share with towns throughout all of NJ. Tools to include case studies, known best practices, emerging practices recorded webinars, articles, checklists and other resources. Presentation can be found: <https://www.shanj.org/past-sha-membership-meetings/> If you work in the three counties and would like to get involved, reach out to Kate.Kelly@shanj.org.
3. SHA introduced the presentation topic: Transportation Transformation with special guests: Steve Cook, Executive Director of the ARC of Mercer

scook@arcmercer.org, Justin Arroyo jarroyo@arcmercer.org,
Transportation Manager, and Michael Courtney, Transportation Director
mcourtney@arcmercer.org.

The highlights of presentation are as follows:

- Originally the project was part of a 5 year grant from the Dept. of Transportation.
- Some basic statistical information about Arc of Mercer's transportation costs was provided. Operates within Mercer County (229 Square Miles), Arc Mercer transports over 1,000 consumers a day, provides 154,000 passenger trips a year (about 10% of what Access Link does), Maintains a fleet of 92 vans & buses, provides 700 daily trips spanning 1.3M passenger miles per year, Average cost per passenger trip of \$11.
- The project's goal was to reduced reliance on Access Link with "Total Agency Transformation" a redesign effort that uses technology to reduce costs and provide better service to Arc of Mercer clients. However, there is such a demand for transportation services in the community, by transforming their own transportation system and alleviating their reliance on Access Link (AL), they have allowed AL to divert their capacity to serve in other areas. This has helped the entire system as a whole. The Arc of Mercer reduced **any** reliance on AL. This innovative solution can be replicated by other agencies. As one example of cost savings, Arc of Mercer also has reduced their need for CDL drivers which are currently in demand and hard to find and paying \$26 per hour (up by \$7 per hour 1 ½ years ago). Even if agencies are not paying drivers directly, the organization you contract with is feeling these increases and will pass that along as higher rates.
- Legislature has recently appropriated \$6 million (through NJ transit) to take what Arc of Mercer has accomplished and build a model to replicate it. Many thanks to the Arc of NJ for their advocacy. The money is there for Arc of Mercer to come out to your agency to help you implement changes.
AL can also improve their delivery.
- What is Total Agency Transportation (TAT)? There is no software you can get off the shelf or consultant you can buy to fix this problem. Arc of Mercer (AM). AM hired three transportation expert consultants who could not offer solutions only an evaluation of the problems which AM already knew. Three components must come together by the agency. Training, Technology and Culture. It was clear from the

- beginning that if they were going to involve their whole agency, AM would have to design their own software. Changing the culture is hard but the good news is that AM has done it, they have the software already and the State of NJ has money available for them to help your agency directly apply the practices that will help.
- TAT original goals 1) safety, 2) quality of life, 3) communication not only with driver but with passenger. This was important during COVID which allowed them to do pre-screening before the pickup. 4) All led to greater efficiency and shorter travel times.
 - Over 40% of AL trips are subscription, which is on behalf of an agency.
TAT can improve the transportation infrastructures that is 200+ DHS, DVR etc. agencies. That is an incredible opportunity relieve the capacity demand on the whole system.
 - AM has created consultancy process internally, with this great their great and experienced team. They have created the software and a solutions roadmap. AM is in the process of developing tools and training. AM has made the mistakes, so you don't have to.
 - Next Step for your agency? Call AM. They can review the opportunity. With a small grant from NJCDD that has funded their ability to work with 2 -3 agencies. This has allowed them to further develop their training.
 - AM reviewed the 5 year journey and improvements they made and obstacles they overcame (which may be some of agency concerns).
 - Creating the right culture is the single most important factor for TAT to be successful. This means getting family buy. That means convincing families AM really wants to improve quality of life not just save money. This is important to DSP conversation, to staff and union. Getting DSP's (and families etc.) comfortable with technology and proper training on how to use it route software.
 - Developing custom software was an important feature of the system. Technology was deployed to enable and support the TAT "system" (not vice-versa). The technology was designed to help agencies like us better perform on that Monday to Friday kind of routing transportation and also supporting recreation. Software developer currently owns the software. AM is a collaborating non compensated partner. AM pays for use of the software.
 - TAT improvements did not happen in one day. One example from AM experience. TAT goal was to have an average travel time of 30 min.

To start AM had 9 routes (9 drivers), 14 residential group homes, main program sites, and special vocational settings. The longest travel time was 2 hours. By implementing some basic changes for example, picking up consumers from other groups homes going to same destination, changing the route slightly, trip time reduced to 95 min. Next they were able to reduce their bus routes from 9 to 6. Once everyone in AM was on board and they were able to maximize, bus routes were reduced to 4. And that meant 5 less drivers. This brought about more technology refinements and the trip time was down to 30 minutes.

- Finally, the key metrics from 2015 to 2019 were reviewed:
Avg Consumer Drive Time per Trip Vehicle 2 Hours to 30 Min -75% change
Vehicle Accidents per Year 20 to 2 (0 in 2018) -90% change
Total Vehicle Accident Losses \$127K to \$6.5K -95% change
Avg Loss per Vehicle Claim \$6,500 to \$3,250 -50% change
Cost per Passenger Mile \$2.75 to \$1.35 -49%
- Whether your agency directly or another agency that you use can improve, the funding is there to do this and improve the system. Q&A followed. Presentation can be found: <https://www.shanj.org/past-sha-membership-meetings/>

4. Deborah Cornavaca, Deputy Chief of Staff for Governor Phil Murphy Deborah.Cornavaca@nj.gov was introduced to give an update on the 2023 State Budget.

The highlights are as follows:

- Deb encouraged every to get the second booster if they can. Please get tested if you have any symptoms even if they seem like a cold or allergies.
- The Governor is committed and the staff is spending a lot of time supporting our Ukraine community. There is a NJ Ukraine website up with some of the non-profits NJ is working with again. Probably the biggest need right now is direct money contributions to ship the goods that we have waiting. The per shipment cost is about \$400,000.
- The Governor presented his budget in March. It is now with the legislature to review. The public hearings are concluded and the legislature will hear from the state departments soon. The Treasurer spoke earlier this week, and the Office of Legislative Services (OLS) and the treasurer are not in complete alignment about the good news is the OLS revenue numbers are higher. NJ revenue is strong. The

- investments in the last 4 years have strengthened the economy even in a pandemic. NJ has now received two credit upgrades.
- Because we have been investing in the foundational important pieces and we are in a stronger position we can now focus in this budget on housing and property taxes. It is clear through the pandemic that if we do not invest in housing, we do not have healthcare and we do not have economic growth. It has now become a foundational issue.
 - The Governor has proposed The Anchor Program that would provide property tax relief to both homeowners and renters. The program is capped at incomes of \$ \$100,000 for eligible renters.
<https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562022/approved/20220303b.shtml>
 - The housing proposal will utilize \$300,000,000 investment in fulfilling the affordable housing trust fund agreements that have yet to be built. Projects that are approved, lined up and ready to go will and do not have the funding so we are going to remove the reason not to do it. This will some way to relieve the crushing shortage of affordable housing. The Governor wants to make sure NJ is investing in diverse housing for diverse needs. She welcomed SHA member's feedback. This is important separate and apart from the investment in the supportive housing trust fund which will continue to get funded.
 - To compliment the housing investment is a healthcare investment Expanding access to the State exchange to affordable healthcare with increased subsidies. Continuing Cover all Kids program and expanding coverage to make more children eligible.
 - The budget includes increases in rates for individuals with complex needs who receive care out of state, investments in harm reduction and addiction treatment. To chip away at the workforce issues, we are doing certain fee waivers for licenses in health care areas to try to help solve for some of the shortages and along with that we are trying to make sure that our workforce development programs are up and robust with the open reopening of the one stops.
 - The Governor by the end of the second term we have really robust programs deeply embedded within government, so that they are a lasting legacy of these administration. The plan is to continue to work collaboratively with the legislature. They have made some indication they'd like to see the budget done early. This year is more complicated because of the parallel ARP funding distribution

discussion which is has a separate joint budget committee process happening at the same time.

- Deb encouraged questions. They want to hear from us.
- In response to questions, Deb reiterated that they have to obligate the full \$6.2 billion within 3 years. There is nothing precluding us that we need more money down the line.
- Diane raised the issue of low payment standards of DHS vouchers. Deb will follow up.

5. Justin Scheid, Acting Chief of Staff Office of Field Policy and Management Justine.E.Scheid2@hud.gov and Carleton Lewis, Senior Management Analyst, Carleton.K.Lewis@hud.gov, HUD office were introduced to give an update. Justin reviewed the **FY2022 and FY2023 HUD budget process** <https://www.hud.gov/budget>

FY 22 (Oct-Sept) Enacted – March 11, 2022

- Housing Choice Vouchers – \$27.3B, 6.2% increase
- Project Based S8 - \$13.9B, 3.9% increase
- Public Housing Fund - \$8.5B, 8.3% increase
- Section 202 - \$1.033B, 20.8% increase
- Section 811 - \$352M, 55.1% increase
- CDBG - \$3.3B, 4.3% decrease (+ \$1B in earmarks)
- Choice - \$350M, 75% increase
- Homelessness Assistance - \$3.2B, 4.7% increase

HUD Appropriations: \$65.702B, 8.9% increase

Other:

2021 Continuing Resolution in Sept- Congress provided supplemental funding CDBG-DR funds from disasters nationwide in 2020 and 2021, New Jersey awarded \$228,346,000

American Rescue Plan (ARP): April 2021, HOME-ARP - \$130M for New Jersey and Emergency Housing Vouchers - 1,595 to New Jersey

HUD's new 2022-2026 Strategic Plan priorities include:

- Support underserved communities
- Ensure access to and increase the production of affordable housing
- Promote homeownership
- Advance sustainable communities
- Strengthens HUD's internal capacity

FY 23 proposed: Highlights

- HCVs: \$32.1 billion (+\$4.8B, +17%). This would expand assistance to an additional 200,000 households.
- Homeless Assistance Grants: \$3.6 billion (+\$363M, +11%)

- \$35 billion (*new*) for the Housing Supply Fund - over seven years (\$5B/year)
 - (\$10B Reduce Affordable Housing Barriers, \$25B Affordable Housing Production)
 - \$2 billion (+\$450M, +30%) for the HOME Investment Partnership Program.
6. Diane introduced Kate Leahy Project Manager for SHA's new Housing Navigator Project (HNP). This project was made possible with a grant from Dept. of Community Affairs (DCA). HNP is an 18-month project with two main goals: to strengthen services that connect people with available housing and to bridge the gap that will provide greater access to housing for the most economically challenged in NJ. Phase I will research best practices across the US to share results and tools with NJ providers. Shelley Samuels from SRS Strategic Associates is conducting the national research. Shelley and our SHA team put together a questionnaire about housing navigation service delivery. The questionnaire will be used to guide interviews and as a stand-alone tool.
- Interviews have been scheduled and completed with NY and AZ and 448 questionnaires were sent out this week. The NJ portion of Phase I will include a survey of programs in NJ. The SHA team has spoken with groups from a range of counties and programs throughout the state and have gained a deeper understanding of housing navigation services being offered. We are also conducting focus groups with individuals who have experienced homelessness. They are starting this week and will continue throughout the month. - We are currently recruiting for focus groups. If you have clients, we'd love to invite them to join. Please contact: Kate Leahy, Kate.Leahy@shanj.org
7. Diane Riley, SHA executive director highlights included:
- a. Diane launched a poll to ascertain whether people have interest in in person meeting and an in person conference. The poll revealed that people were in favor of in person meetings.
 - b. Diane is working with the Palace at Somerset Park on zeroing in on a date for the in person conference (November).
 - c. Advocacy: SHA presented budget testimony and that is on our website.
 - d. Update on Multiple Employer plan for retirement. SHA is working with Mutual of America on setting that up. Please reach out to me diane.riley@shanj.org or Thomas Moller at Mutual of America Thomas.Moller@mutualofamerica.com

All Presentation can be found: <https://www.shanj.org/past-sha-membership>

The meeting concluded at 12:05 PM. Next meeting of the SHA membership is scheduled for Wed, June 8, 2022

SHA Advocacy and Policy Committee met after the membership meeting.

Submitted by Diane Riley, Executive Director